

doing, you can clearly see the injustice and the lack of values in this budget.

The President is proposing that we make deep cuts in many programs that are important to working men and women, for those in real need. And why? To pay for large tax breaks for the very wealthy and to provide a variety of giveaways to special interests.

In his budget, the President is ignoring the lessons of the Gospel, the lessons there of the rich man. For example, the President's budget cuts health care for the most vulnerable citizens. The budget would cut Medicaid, which ensures that more than 50 million children, pregnant women, elderly, and people with disabilities have access to the medical services they need. At the same time, the budget maintains a slush fund with billions for HMOs. That is not right.

The President's budget also calls for cutting education. More than 48 education programs will be affected, with the cuts exceeding \$1 billion. So our children will suffer. At the same time, the budget calls for opening a precious wilderness area in Alaska for the oil and gas industry. That is not right.

The budget cuts benefits for veterans. The men and women who served our Nation with such bravery and courage over the decades, the people who have put their lives on the line on behalf of this Nation, are going to have to pay more for their health care. At the same time, the administration wants to protect the drug industry by denying Medicare the right to bargain for lower prices. That is not right.

The budget cuts the COPS Program. It is an over 90-percent cut. That is the program that helps communities hire police officers to keep streets safer. So our men and women in uniform and the neighborhoods they serve will suffer. At the same time, the budget does little to close the special interest loopholes that are allowing big corporations to avoid paying taxes. That is not right.

The budget underfunds environmental protection. At the same time, it lets big polluters off the hook from paying the cost of cleanups. That is not right.

The budget fails to adequately fund the National Family Planning Program, which provides critical health care services to low-income women and helps reduce the number of unintended pregnancies. At the same time, it continues to support so-called health savings accounts, which are tax shelters for the wealthy that fail to meet the needs of those of modest means. That is not right.

America is a country that values everyone, the worker just as much as the CEO of the largest company in America. And most Americans would agree it is not right to cut health care for children and the elderly, cut education, cut benefits for veterans, cut law en-

forcement, while handing out a wide variety of giveaways to special interests and the powerful. That is not just bad policy, it is wrong, it is immoral.

Unfortunately, the budget resolution approved yesterday by the Budget Committee, with a few changes in the margins, is based largely on the President's deeply flawed budget. I think we can do better. I think we can create a budget that is as good for Lazarus as it is for the rich man.

Next week, we will take up the budget resolution, as I have indicated. We will work to make it better. But if the last couple weeks is an indication, there will be marching orders given to the majority, and they will march down here and vote against veterans, against children, against women, and against education generally.

So we will do our best. We will present these issues to the American people, and the American people will see what is happening in this country. The programs that are important to this country are being starved, starved at the expense of the American people. And the tax cuts go on.

Our goal is to turn this budget into a moral document for which we can all be proud, a document that truly reflects our Nation's priorities and the values of the American people.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. ROBERTS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. ROBERTS. Mr. President, I understand we are in morning business.

MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, there will be a period for the transaction of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

The Senator from Kansas is recognized.

SERVICEMEMBERS CIVIL RELIEF ACT

Mr. ROBERTS. Mr. President, I rise today to share with the Senate a story that I truly hope is the exception to the rule. It begins last year, when a member of one of Kansas's local fire departments was called to active duty in Iraq. Certainly, that is no unique happening where today in every State people are called to service, whether they be in the service or National Guard. This gentleman, Mr. Steven Welter, and his wife have worked hard to make a good life for themselves and their three children. They live in the

small community of Osawatomie, KS—it is a very fine community—where they are surrounded by friends and family. They recently purchased their first home.

Well, knowing that with Mr. Welter called to active duty they might face some real challenges meeting their mortgage payment, they contacted their mortgage provider to make them aware of their situation and to seek relief under the Servicemembers Civil Relief Act.

Now, Congress has long recognized the burden that military duty places on soldiers' lives when they are called to active duty. During the Civil War, Congress placed a moratorium on civil actions that were brought against servicemembers. Today, through the Servicemembers Civil Relief Act, Congress provides important rights and legal protections to lessen the burden on military servicemembers. A key component of that act, initially passed by Congress 40 years ago as the Soldiers' and Sailors' Civil Relief Act, is to provide the protection for servicemembers whose military service makes it difficult for them to meet financial obligations incurred prior to being called up for active duty. That seems pretty simple. It does not forgive debt. It does not relieve a servicemember of their obligation to meet their financial responsibilities.

Among other protections, the act shields a servicemember or their family from eviction or from losing their home. The Welters sought relief under the act, requesting that their mortgage company work with them to help them meet their financial obligation. However, the mortgage company responded by sending notice to Mrs. Keira Welter that the company had initiated court proceedings to foreclose on her home. You can imagine this lady's distress. Not only is she worried about the safety of her husband in Iraq, she is now faced with losing her home, with three children, the very scenario the Servicemembers Civil Relief Act is designed to prevent.

Not knowing who to turn to—and she thought pretty hard about it and didn't know who to call—she contacted my office and requested our assistance. After numerous conversations with her mortgage lender, Wells Fargo, I believe we have resolved her situation. I remain concerned, however, that those responsible for complying with the Servicemembers Civil Relief Act are not fully educated about their obligations, and that that problem is nationwide.

What is particularly appalling about this situation is that the mortgage company initially claimed they were unaware of the Servicemembers Civil Relief Act, a law that has been on the books for 40 years. They further claimed that "they just can't be expected to keep up with everything that goes on in Washington."